

EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER
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on the Boulevard Montparnasse. Besides what he had written about them in a few newspaper articles or short stories, such as "Le Chomage," "Mon voisin Jacques" and "Le Forgeron,"¹ which will be found in the "JSTouveaux Contes a Mnon," he remembered a great many things, funerals, festivities, and junketings. He had discovered, too, a suitable title — " L'Assommoir " — in Alfred Delvau's slang dictionary, and it was this circumstance which, when he had written two chapters of the book in his usual style, suddenly inspired him with the idea of penning it in the real vernacular of the Parisian masses, not the special slang of thieves and prostitutes, such as Eugene Sue had employed, and, in part, invented, in "Les Mysteres de Paris," but in the current *langage populaire*, understood by everybody.²

It was during Zola's stay at St. Aubin, face to face with the sea,—whose influence was not lost upon him for, as will be shown, it suggested in part a later work, " La Joie de Vivre," — that he mapped out this book on the Parisian *pro-Utaire*, which was to raise him to fame; and Alexis tells us that though he already had the chief scenes of the story in his mind he was for a time at a loss for a suitable intrigue which would weld them well together. The idea of taking a girl of the people, who stumbles and has two

children by
her seducer, then marries another man,
establishes herself in
business by dint of hard work, but is borne
down by the
conduct of her husband, who becomes a
drunkard, had pre-
viously occurred to him, figuring, indeed, in the
original
genealogical tree which he had drawn up for
his series, but

¹ In "Le Forgeron" one will find the first idea of Goujet of
"L'Assom-
moir" ; while " Mon voisin Jacques " is the original of
Bazouge, the mute.

³ Alexis, *I. c.*, p. 109.